

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Jill Costello  
Headteacher  
Warnham CofE Primary School  
Freeman Road  
Warnham  
Horsham  
West Sussex  
RH12 3RQ

Dear Mrs Costello

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Warnham CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure that no momentum is lost in improving pupils' outcomes in writing.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the phase leaders for key stages 1 and 2 and members of the governing body. Her Majesty's Inspector spoke to a representative of West Sussex local authority on the telephone. A range of documentation was reviewed, including recent plans to improve the school,

information about performance management, evidence of the work of governors and the school's system for tracking and analysing pupils' progress. Her Majesty's Inspector toured all classes in the school and observed teaching and learning in all teaching groups. A sample of pupils' work was reviewed.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection two teachers have left the school and two have been appointed. One senior leader has left the school. The headteacher has announced that she will be retiring at the end of the autumn term and the recruitment process for a new headteacher has commenced. Some new members have joined the governing body.

## **Main findings**

Although disappointed with the outcome from the section 5 inspection, leaders and governors were not surprised about the weaknesses that were identified. They now realise that some aspects of their leadership and the work of the school had become complacent. Leaders and governors knew that they needed to improve but the pace of change was too slow and expectations not high enough. Following the inspection, leaders have set about systematically improving the key areas. Most importantly, leaders and managers have increased the urgency of improvement and the precision and firmness with which they tackle weaknesses. As their work is beginning to pay off, leaders are gradually learning to be more bold, confident and ambitious.

Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that staff have gained a deeper knowledge of what should be expected of pupils. They are now using information about pupils' progress more precisely to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and identify what they need to do next. The school's assessment tracking system, introduced in September 2016, provides a useful tool for tracking pupils' progress over time and from day to day. Teachers and staff are able to identify gaps in pupils' learning and adjust their planning to make sure that pupils catch up.

Evidence from this monitoring inspection demonstrates that leaders have a more finely tuned and personalised view of each pupil in the school. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress have been introduced at a one-to-one level. These meetings happen regularly and have generated a much more in-depth discussion about pupils' progress and attainment.

Phase leaders have stepped up to take on responsibility and are growing into their roles, overseeing performance of teachers and pupils in their areas. The staff teams in key stage 1 and key stage 2 meet regularly together to plan learning and reflect upon their practice. As a result, there is a more cohesive ethos and staff can learn from each other. During this monitoring inspection, it was clear that expectations of pupils' work and ways of working are more common and consistent across all

phases and classes in the school.

Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is more rooted in pupils' progress. Staff have really begun to measure the quality of teaching by its impact on pupils' progress over time, rather than judging a one-off performance in a lesson.

Some of the strongest improvement in the school's work has been in key stage 1. Leaders' increased monitoring has raised expectations. Leaders now insist that pupils build upon the strong foundations established as children in the Reception year. Better teaching and a deeper understanding of early reading have all contributed to improvements in pupils' progress. This improvement is most notable in the school's results in the phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) screening check, which have increased by 25% and are now above provisional national figures. Similarly, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment has greatly improved in reading and mathematics. These improvements have clearly increased leaders' confidence in what pupils are capable of.

The very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. They have now outstripped their non-disadvantaged peers in 2017 in mathematics and reading. The recent review of the pupil premium and an overall sharper focus on disadvantaged pupils has led to their increased greater progress and more suitable intervention programmes where needed.

Writing remains a weakness throughout the school, with provisional 2017 outcomes remaining much lower than national figures. Much of this weakness is down to a legacy of weaker teaching. However, leaders are now much clearer about how to improve outcomes in writing. They have wisely changed the curriculum plans to include more challenging texts to read and more stimulating and engaging tasks to build upon pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. Nevertheless, leaders rightly recognise that a whole-school approach to writing is needed. Some pupils lack confidence in composing longer pieces of writing and are not self-assured when voicing their thoughts as part of planning for writing. Pupils' handwriting does not develop a suitably neat and efficient cursive style, particularly in the younger year groups, which hampers their confidence and fluency.

The recommended review of governance took place shortly after the last inspection and identified key strengths and weaknesses in members' skills. Governors needed to develop their understanding of progress information and check leaders' monitoring of staff performance more stringently. Some new governors have joined the governing body and have brought an increased range of skills, some with experience in education. Governors' sharper focus on the school's use of pupil premium funding, pupils' progress and staff performance have increased their impact on the work of the school. Governors have benefited from attending pupil progress meetings and observing key aspects of the school's work. Governors have their own action plan, which is a regularly updated and helpfully precise document.

Governors now realise that the recent section 5 inspection has been beneficial in the long run. They have a much deeper awareness of their responsibilities and duty to promote a culture of ambition in the school.

### **External support**

The school benefits from strong support and a close relationship with the diocese and the local authority. Following the inspection, the local authority stepped in, supporting a review of the pupil premium funding and the review of governance. Local authority officers advised leaders on the post-inspection improvement plan and how it should be monitored and evaluated. Advisers have helped leaders and governors, through coaching, to gain confidence, authority and the ability to carry out school improvement. The school is wisely planning to support new leaders with a leadership coaching programme. Crucially, the local authority has supported the headteacher, leaders and governors with dealing with underperformance more directly and assertively.

The local authority has increased the number of visits and amount of support offered and is supporting governors with the recruitment and appointment of a new headteacher.

As yet, the local authority has not linked the school with a good or better school, which would be helpful to maintain high expectations.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Chichester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**